

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2647, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 8, 2009

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, providing for the common defense is one of the federal government's most important duties. I take my duty to rigorously review the Defense budget very seriously, supporting defense spending that is smart and sustainable and speaking out against funding that is wasteful or misdirected. As such, I support the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010.

My first priority remains the protection of our forces already on the ground, including the Oregon National Guard's 41st Combat Brigade, and equipping our military to face current threats. I have been pleased with the Obama administration's willingness to begin a tough review of the U.S. military, requesting additional equipment and healthcare support for our service-men and -women—especially our Guard and Reserve, while requesting cutbacks on outdated programs. Although difficult in the short-term, cutting unnecessary programs to orient our military to face today's threats is the right thing to do and keeps us safer in the long run.

Part of this also involves empowering the military to clean up its widespread environmental legacy. In every state, communities must deal with former training grounds contaminated with live bombs, leftover shells, and leaking chemicals. I'm frankly disappointed that in the past there has been a distinct lack of political will needed to clean up our backyards within our lifetime, and I will continue to support increased Environmental Restoration funding. However, I'm pleased that two bipartisan amendments I offered with my colleague

GINNY BROWN-WAITE remain in this bill. These provisions will increase the transparency of programs responsible for clean-up and require the Department to start thinking strategically about ways to lessen the longer-term health and environmental consequences of war and training. I thank the Chairman and the Committee staff for working with me on these points.

In addition, I am proud to support the inclusion of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention provision in this bill. This bipartisan, long-awaited legislation will help prevent violence and ensure that justice is served for perpetrators of these hateful acts, chipping away at violent intolerance and protecting all our citizens.

I am continually mindful of the fact that today's threats—extremism, economic upheaval, pandemics, and environmental devastation—cannot be addressed by military force alone. In addition to supporting this legislation, I will continue to advocate for national security strategies that also address issues of poverty, intolerance, and mismanagement.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 2009

Mr. POSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month. This national day of observance is celebrated September 15 through October 15 and commemorates the anniversary of independence for 7 Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua on September 15th; Mexico on the 16th; and Chile on September 18th. It is also a tribute to the many achievements of the diverse peoples of Spanish-speaking backgrounds who have come to the United States from

countries throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.

In the United States, more than 35 million people identify themselves as Hispanic Americans. In Florida alone, 20 percent of the state population is of Latin American descent. In the next several years, the number of Hispanic-owned businesses in America is expected to reach 4.3 million—that's a 42 percent increase and three times faster than the national average! And according to the Latino Business Review, Central Florida is at the heart of this growth. The Florida Puerto Rican/Hispanic Chamber of Commerce was founded in 2002 with just 8 members, and now has over 312 members! And the Hispanic Business Council of the Kissimmee/Osceola Chamber has over 150 Members. These very businesses, based here in the U.S. are playing and will play an ever increasing role in expanding U.S. exports to Latin American countries—creating jobs here in America to export our goods and services in this increasingly competitive global marketplace.

I have enjoyed a long relationship with this active community and recently had the privilege of visiting with this group of talented business owners. Their leadership and support for economic development is vital to our economy.

Our communities also benefit from the strong faith and family values engrained in the Hispanic culture. These values provide the foundation upon which Hispanic Americans build their families, producing citizens that often become pillars of their communities. Also, the strong ties that Hispanic Americans maintain with their ancestral homeland remind us that the United States must pursue robust relations with its neighbors in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Let us all take a moment this month to celebrate the independence of these Latin American countries and to show our gratitude for the important contributions Hispanic Americans make in our communities.

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